6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1994 MD12 Natana MD12
Upper Liard

321 412 bone splinters. Needles with eyes appear to have been manufactured prior to contact, their use being aided by a "thimble" consisting of a flat piece of bone held in the palm. The bone arrow points will be described in connection with weapons.

As already indicated, horn from mountain sheep, goats, and caribou found a place in the technology. To prepare spoons and blades from goat or sheep horn the material was boiled until soft, split with a stone ax, and then shaped with a stone knife. Without previous boiling, caribou horn could be sharpened (by grinding ?) to provide an adze or scraper with an edge sharp enough to cut through the hairs on a caribou hide. The sharp point of a caribou horn made a useful tool for drilling through wood. Another drill consisted of a beaver tooth mounted in a wooden handle.

322 412 Although objects of wood and bark played important roles in daily living, woodworking remained a relatively underdeveloped industry carried out with simple apparatus. Spruce appears to have been the most frequently used wood. The available cutting tools made it relatively impossible to cut down any tree larger than a sapling so that other trees had to be weakened by firing the base. Then came the problem of cutting [340] the trunk into planks of desired length and thickness. A felled tree was split with a birchwood wedge driven with a maul made by lashing a heavy stone to a wooden handle.[1] In the course of using a maul of this type a man sometimes chanted "go gak, go gak," the charm urging the lashing around the head of the maul to remain strong and not to loosen. Fabrication of the resultant planks into snowshoes, snow shovels, handles, and other objects demanded use of the cutting tools previously described. Spruce bark [314] provided a variety of objects ranging from canoes to drinking and storage vessels. Large pieces of bark were often peeled by a skilled man who, after selecting a suitable tree, climbed into it on a ladder consisting of a spruce sapling bound into the branches. After clearing the trunk of branches he cut a girth around the tree with a caribou-horn adze. He then split the bark lengthwise for about four feet and peeled it free from the trunk with a wooden barking tool fitted with a crook. This implement partly encircled the tree, under the bark. The lowermost rind was tied in place around the trunk with babiche line while the worker lengthened the split downward by cutting. This continued until the bottom of the tree was reached. Here another girth was cut and from the ground several men now pulled the strip fanwise from the tree. The lashing at the top of the piece had been left loose enough to permit the large sheet to gradually slip down as the men drew the lower edges free. White birch bark, scarce along the upper Liard River, found little place in technology.

281 From the pelts of slain animals the people secured garments, sleeping robes, and storage bags. First, however, the skins had to undergo processing to render them fit for these purposes. Fur covered pelts required thorough fleshing after which they were dried and perhaps stretched. Beaver skins were dried and stretched on oval frames of willow very similar to the type still in use. People stretched lynx, fox, muskrat, and similar pelts, peeled whole from the animal's body, over form boards that slipped into the skins. Rabbit skin, intended for cutting up into plaiting line, could be best dried

[1] Flaked stone sledge hammers as well as plain wooden mauls are specified to have been made by the Tlingit. Drucker, *Culture Element Distributions: XXVI, Northwest Coast* (1950), 183.

6: Hunting: E-5 (1943-1945)1954 MD18 Nelson MD18
Upper Hard

blueberry. Other vegetable products taken from the land included fern roots in spring; fly bolete, mushrooms, frequently stolen from a squirrel's cache; crowing apples, that grew up in the mountains and were described as tasting somewhat like turnips; wild onions, of which only the greens were eaten; rose petals, made into a beverage by boiling; and wild rhubarb. Both sexes chewed gum taken from a "half dead" spruce tree, a choice advised by the fact that such gum would not stick to the teeth. Jack-pine and spruce fibers were also eaten but used, birch fibers, willow bark, wild rose, and wild pea held on place in the diet. Birch sap, obtained by tapping the birch in spring, resident or a minor delicacy but people ignored poplar sap. Children kept the camp supplied with water, securing it from the river or in the form of snow. Warmed moose milk was a common drink.

Fish food could be secured with the least expenditure of energy by setting traps, including snares, deadfalls, nets, seal, porkeys, pitfalls. For bear the Indian located a snare made of braided babiche (as many as eight strands of semi-tanned skin line might be used) near a berry patch, while for moose and caribou he placed similar snares between trees and across the runways which these animals had made in the course of visiting drinking places and salt licks. Fences were sometimes extended from either side of a moose or caribou snare. At other times trappers thrust two forked poles into the ground and across them suspended a toggle pole twelve feet long and three inches in diameter. From the toggle hung a [illegible] snare while on either side a fence directed the animal into the trap. Men always set moose and caribou snares. "Even if a woman knew how to make a caribou snare she could not make it good enough." For lynx a semicircle of poles with a center opening for the snare was anchored in the ground. A single strand of babiche had sufficient strength to hold this animal. Such snares might be erected by women. In mountain gulches through which van sheep trails were erected few toggle snares for sheep. Often the poles used in this work had to be packed long distances above timberline. Up to six strands of babiche were twisted together to make a snare line strong enough for that animal. For beaver, men (and also women) set snares of three-strand twisted babiche near a dam.

Ground hog snares featured a rock toggle and required two-strand twisted babiche. The family provided itself with a number of six- or seven-foot long forked poles in the fall and packed them above the timberline. The trapper firmly placed one such pole for each snare in a rock cairn near a ground hog den. On either side of the pole ran a small fence about a foot high. After forming the snare loop between these fences, the snare line was bent and knotted around a small trigger stick before continuing through the fork of the pole. Halfway below the fork the line was weighted with a 20-pound rock. The trigger stick was fitted under a convenient knob or protuberance on the upright pole, the toggle's weight serving to keep it fixed until an animal entered the snare and dislodged the stick, whereupon the rock fell to the ground. The weight of the falling toggle lifted the animal off the earth. In timbered areas lifting-pole snares like those frequently used for rabbits were also set for ground hog. In fact, the rock toggle appears to represent an adaptation of the lifting-pole principle to treeless country. Men, boys, and women built ground hog snares.